

STORY QUEST CHILDRENS BOOKS

For Immediate Release

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New Jersey Author Wins Prestigious National Children's Picture Book Awards

A delectable picture book, I Want Cake! will capture children's attention and dazzle with beautiful illustrations. Spectacular layered illustrations and a playful story combine in I Want Cake! – a deliciously entertaining children's book.

MANALAPAN, New Jersey – Jo Ann Kairys is pleased to announce her children's book *I Want Cake!* has won two prestigious national children's picture book awards:

- Foreword Reviews' INDIEFAB Book of the Year Awards (Finalist)
- Mom's Choice® Children's Picture Book Award

FOREWORD REVIEWS AWARD – Each year, *Foreword Reviews* shines a light on a select group of indie publishers, university presses, and self-published authors whose work stands out from the crowd. “The 2015 INDIEFAB finalist selection process is as inspiring as it is rigorous,” said Victoria Sutherland, publisher of *Foreword Reviews*. “The strength of this list of finalists is further proof that small, independent publishers are taking their rightful place as the new driving force of the entire publishing industry.”

MOM'S CHOICE Award® – Having been rigorously evaluated by a panel of MCA evaluators, “*I Want Cake!*” is deemed to be among the best children's books for families. “Our aim to introduce families and educators to best-in-class children's books,” explains Dawn Matheson, Executive Director of the *Mom's Choice Awards*. “We have a passion to help families grow emotionally, physically and spiritually. Parents and educators know that books bearing our seal of approval offer the highest quality.”

ABOUT THE AUTHORS AND BOOK

Parents, teachers and librarians concerned about the lack of diversity in children's books will welcome *I Want Cake!* – an intergenerational picture book featuring three precocious siblings as they venture through their multicultural neighborhood looking for cake for breakfast.

Jo Ann Kairys of New Jersey – a diversity expert, award-winning author and illustrator – wrote the book with her son, Daniel Kairys, M.D., a general surgeon in South Central Florida.

She also illustrated it and wove the rich visual diversity of three generations of their family into the vibrant, eye-popping scenes.

This story, for children ages 4-8, begins with six-year-old Leen telling her older sister, YaYa, she wants cake for breakfast. Though at first YaYa resists the idea, together they quickly rope in their little brother Jaden. They try to get help from their Haitian mother and grandmother, American Jewish father and grandfather, and their Cuban neighbor. Each adult disagrees with the cake request and urges them instead to eat one of their own, culturally-preferred breakfast delicacies. Undeterred, the cake-for-breakfast team perseveres, even as the adults secretly delight in their escapade.

"I wrote the book because I was inspired by my son Daniel's storytelling," Kairys said. "He dreamed up five original stories for kids during long drives through lonely Florida sugar cane fields on his way to the hospital where he serves as the only surgeon."

"Because the children featured in *I Want Cake!* are part of our nuclear family, our focus was not on their cultural or racial identity, but rather on writing a fun story that reflects the rich diversity of our extended family's background, personalities and spirit. Unfortunately, only one in ten children's books published each year in the U.S. includes children of color. Frankly, we just trust that grandparents, parents and children of all backgrounds will delight together in this family adventure."

In addition to her Haitian American grandchildren, Jo Ann Kairys and her husband also have three adopted children from both Native American and Russian American backgrounds, two grandchildren from Native American and African American backgrounds, and one grandchild born in Russia. The Kairys' first book, *Sunbelievable*, released in October 2011, won five national book awards for storytelling and illustrations, including Mom's Choice Gold Award®.

I Want Cake! is available from Barnes and Noble: <http://bit.ly/IWantCakebn> and Amazon: <http://bit.ly/IWantCakeamzn>

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Jo Ann Kairys and Daniel Kairys, M.D. are available for media interviews and can provide background and story ideas for the media.